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Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations

Phasing out the use of gratis personnel in the Secretariat

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report, which sets out a phased plan of action to reduce and eliminate to the maximum extent possible the use of gratis personnel in the Secretariat, is submitted pursuant to paragraph 9 of General Assembly resolution 51/243 of 15 September 1997 and to the developments outlined in paragraphs 2 to 4 below.

2. One of the specific actions by the Secretary-General in a proposed set of Organization-wide reform measures put forward in his report entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform" is the development of a plan for phasing out the use of gratis personnel at the earliest possible date.[1]

3. By its resolution 51/243 of 15 September 1997, the General Assembly, *inter alia*, emphasized that gratis personnel were not a substitute for staff to be recruited against authorized posts for the implementation of mandated programmes and activities (para. 1); reaffirmed that the programme of work and mandates approved by Member States must be financed in the manner determined by the General Assembly, based upon proposals of the Secretary-General (para. 2); and decided that gratis personnel should not be sought for financial reasons (para. 3).

4. As regards the acceptance of new gratis personnel in the future, the General Assembly in paragraph 4 of resolution 51/243 authorized the Secretary-General to accept type II gratis personnel provided by Governments or other entities[2] only in the following specific circumstances: (a) after the approval of a budget, to provide expertise not available within the Organization for very specialized functions, as identified by the Secretary-General, and for a limited and specified period of time; (b) to provide temporary and urgent assistance in the case of new and/or expended mandates of the Organization, pending a decision by the General Assembly on the level of resources required to implement those mandates.

5. In respect of the current situation, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General in paragraph 9 of the resolution to proceed with the expeditious phasing out of type II gratis personnel falling outside the scope of the two conditions stated in the preceding paragraph and under which the Secretary-General might in future accept gratis personnel.

6. In paragraph 13 of resolution 51/243, the General Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to report on the impact of the implementation of paragraph 4 (b) and 9 of the resolution.

II. Phasing out plan and its impact

7. In recent times, there has not been any significant access to gratis personnel for implementation of activities

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approved under the regular budget. In the light of General Assembly resolution 51/243, the Secretary-General will ensure that type II gratis personnel are accepted only under the conditions set out in paragraph 4 (a) and (b) of the resolution.

8. Current gratis personnel who fall under the provisions of paragraph 9 of resolution 51/243 will be phased out, in accordance with the terms of existing agreements.

9. As shown in the annex to the present report, as of 1 November 1997, type II gratis personnel currently perform functions in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the Office of the Emergency Relief Coordinator (formerly the Department of Humanitarian Affairs), the Department of Management, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Centre for International Crime Prevention (formerly Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division) at the United Nations Office at Vienna (UNOV) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

10. With regard to the Department of Management, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Centre for International Crime Prevention and UNEP, no adverse impact on programme delivery is anticipated as a result of the phasing out of gratis personnel. At present, the Department of Management has five gratis personnel assigned to the Procurement Division of the Office of Central Support Services. The Department of Management proposes to phase out all such gratis personnel by the end of July 1998. Similarly, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs has five gratis personnel carrying out assigned specialized functions within the department. It is anticipated that such personnel will be phased out in accordance with the expiration of the current agreements, but no later than May 1998. As at 1 November 1997, the Centre for International Crime Prevention and UNEP both have one gratis staff each whose services are due to cease in November 1999 and May 1998 respectively.

11. With regard to the Office of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, while the Office relies, and is expected to continue to rely, on a significant number of gratis personnel that perform functions of a purely technical and operational nature, such personnel will be governed by the provisions of administrative instruction ST/AI/231/Rev.1 of 23 January 1991 (see A/52/698, para. 4). As a result, they will be included in the category of type I gratis personnel.

12. As regards the impact of the phasing out of type II gratis personnel upon the functioning of the International Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, it has been proposed that essential functions currently being performed by gratis personnel be covered by temporary posts in the context of the respective tribunal budget proposals for 1998.[3] Should the additional post resources be approved by the General Assembly, the current gratis personnel would then be phased out within six months, by 30 June 1998.

13. With regard to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the impact of the phasing out of type II gratis personnel will be addressed in the context of the Secretary-General's proposals to be presented with regard to the support account for peacekeeping operations covering the period from 1 July 1998 to 30 June 1999. In this connection, a number of additional posts will be requested under the support account. Pending a review and in-depth evaluation of the use of support account resources, including comprehensive substantiation of post and non-post requirements, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 51/239 A of 17 June 1997, it is not possible at the current stage to identify the exact number of posts to be requested.

14. In the meantime, the immediate large-scale withdrawal of such personnel would seriously jeopardize the ability of the Department to carry out its functions fully, as a good number of gratis personnel are actually performing functions related to mandated activities. It is for this reason that the Secretary-General intends to phase out gratis personnel over a period of time, to be completed by 31 December 1999.

15. In addressing the needs of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, for those gratis personnel whose individual agreements are due to expire, depending upon the need for the retention of such personnel, it is intended to extend or replace, for specific periods, only those gratis personnel performing functions that fall under paragraph 4 (a) of resolution 51/243. In the interim, every effort will be made to hasten the reduction of the number of gratis personnel performing other activities, with the understanding that all such personnel will not be retained beyond 31 December 1999.

16. The annex to the present report indicates the expiration dates to type II gratis personnel currently in service with the Organization as at 1 November 1997 as well as the number of such personnel in the Secretariat, totalling 204. This figure represents a reduction in both the number of gratis personnel and the number of departments which utilize these resources, as last reported to the General Assembly in the annual report on the use of gratis personnel prepared pursuant to paragraph 12 of resolution 51/243.[4]

Notes

[1] A/51/950, para. 119, action 3.

[2] See A/51/688 and Corr.1, paras. 24-40.

[3] See A/C.5/52/4 and A/C.5/52/13.

[4] A/52/709, chap. III.

Annex

Expiration dates of individual agreements of type II gratis personnel in service as at 1 November 1997

(Number of persons)

Department/ Office	Grand total	1997		1998											1999											
		November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
DPKO[a]	130	1	9	15	2	4	4	7	10	20	12	7	8	7	3	2	3	1	—	1	—	8	1	1	2	2	—
Tribunal (Yugoslavia)	52	1	1	—	—	9	1	1	2	23	1	10	—	1	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Tribunal (Rwanda)	7	1	6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
OERC	3[b]	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
DM	5	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
DESA	5	—	—	1	1	1	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
CICP/UNOV	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
UNEP	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Number of gratis personnel phased out by month	204	3	16	17	5	14	6	10	13	45	14	18	8	8	5	2	3	1	—	1	—	8	1	1	2	3	—
Total gratis personnel by month	204	201	185	168	163	149	143	133	120	75	61	43	35	27	22	20	17	16	16	15	15	7	6	5	3	—	—

[a] Abbreviations:
DPKO — Department of Peacekeeping Operations
OERC — Office of the Emergency Relief Coordinator
DM — Department of Management
DESA — Department of Economic and Social Affairs
CICP/UNOV — Centre for International Crime Prevention
UNEP — United Nations Environment Programme

[b] The number of gratis personnel under the Office of the Emergency Relief Coordinator excludes 80 members of the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team whose services are utilized on a "as-and-when-needed" basis and funded through voluntary contributions.